Local: Cops eye church that utilizes marijuana. B1

Sports

Is Gruden new Raiders coach?

"I think I am being considered, yes. I hope I'm a candidate," he says. C1

Nation: Much of country under freeze warning. A3

The newspaper of Silicon Valley

The Mercury News

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SUCCESS STORY

'MURDER CAPITAL'S' BIG TURNAROUND

How East Palo Alto did it: New era of cooperation with police cited as city that once outdid Washington, D.C., for violence sees slayings almost disappear

Mayor Ruben Abrica

"There were a few operations that did take out some of the more hardcore criminal elements. You can't do it all on good faith and trust."

Pastor Paul Bains

"Before crack, there were two-parent homes, and people owned their homes," said Bains, who saw that change. "Palo Alto had drive-ins, and East Palo Alto had drive-bys."

Detective Lydia Cardoza

"Officers are a lot closer to the community as a whole. Closing that gap and opening up those lines of communication have been really crucial to all the changes."

Chief Albert Pardini

"(Our) relationship was developed by talking to them at community meetings ... meeting people in their front yard, ... in situations where they don't need police."

By Robert Salonga
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EAST PALO ALTO » They were toddlers when their town earned the dubious distinction of America's murder capital a quarter-century ago. In this bayside community bypassed by Silicon Valley's wealth, gunfire became the soundtrack to childhoods spent avoiding parks and hustling home before dark.

Now, as Detective Lydia Cardoza and Officers Jose Luaorozco and Robert Olvera patrol East Palo Alto's streets, their Peninsula hometown that witnessed so much tragedy has undergone a transformation few had imagined possible. Violent crime has dropped precipitously — by over 60 percent in the past 25 years. Murder has almost vanished.

"Now you see people jogging, and kids playing in the parks. They're not worried if there's going to be a drive-by shooting."

— Officer Jose Luaorozco, East Palo Alto police

"Now you see people jogging, and kids playing in the parks," said Luaorozco, a 26-year-old Marine veteran and two-year officer who once lived on Dumbarton Avenue. "They're not worried if there's going to be a drive-by shooting."

East Palo Alto became the per-capita murder leader of the United States in 1992 when its 42 homicides, fueled by gang and drug warfare among its population of 24,000, pushed its killing rates past crime-plagued Compton and Washington, D.C.

In 2017, the city logged one homicide, a mid-December murder-suicide between do-

EAST PALO ALTO » PAGE 7

Crime stats through the years. PAGE A7

GETTING AROUND NEW CAPS

State's brash plan for tax law

Donations to California coffers could replace income levy — and be entirely deductible for IRS

By Katy Murphy
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SACRAMENTO » California Democrats are toying with a brash scheme to skirt a new federal cap on state and local tax deductions: Instead of paying taxes to the Golden State, Californians would be allowed to donate the money to the state's coffers — and deduct the entire sum from their federal taxes.

"This isn't some grand new thing. This is something that states all over the country have been doing for some time."

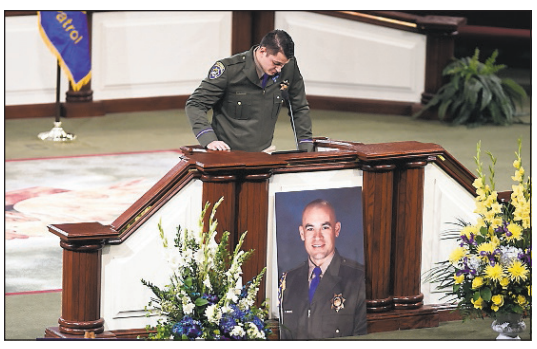
— Kirk Stark, UCLA professor

The hastily drafted proposal — to be unveiled as soon as Wednesday, when lawmakers return from a monthslong recess — strikes back at one of the least popular elements of the GOP's tax overhaul, one that hit California and other high-tax, high-cost states the hardest. It also promises to establish a new front in California's famous anti-Trump resistance efforts, which last year took on immigration enforcement and environmental regulatory rollbacks.

"The Republican tax scam disproportion-

TAX » PAGE 7

FATAL COLLISION



DAN HONDA — STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Officer Jonathan Velasquez spoke Saturday at the funeral of his partner, Officer Andrew J. Camilleri.

Driver charged with murder in officer's death

Hayward man accused of driving more than 100 mph while intoxicated

By Angela Ruggiero
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VALLEJO » A 22-year-old Hayward man suspected of driving 120 mph while intoxicated on Christmas Eve has been charged with murder in connection with the traffic collision that killed a California High Patrol officer, authorities announced Tuesday.

Ali

Mohammed Abraar Ali was identified as the suspect in the tragic wreck on Interstate 880 in Hayward that killed Officer Andrew J. Camilleri. Ali's speeding red Cadillac CTS-V drifted off Interstate 880 just before midnight and slammed into the back of Camilleri's patrol SUV parked on the shoulder,

CHP » PAGE 7

LAWSUITS FILED BY STATE

Immigration retaliation threats soar

Workers who complain about conditions or pay are told they will be reported to ICE

By Andrew Khouri
Los Angeles Times

LOS ANGELES » The deal the worker struck was simple: $150 a day to tile a bathroom and stucco the walls of a suburban home. The pay was to come at the end of each day but never did, according to a lawsuit filed in Los Angeles County Superior Court by the California labor commissioner.

After six days with no pay, the lawsuit alleges, the worker finally confronted his boss, who then snapped, called him a "wetback" and threatened to report him to immigration authorities.

BRIAN VAN DER BRUG — LOS ANGELES TIMES

Complaints over immigration-related retaliation threats surged last year.

"Let me share something with you, not only am I (an ex)-sheriff, my family are all in the police department," the lawsuit says the boss wrote in a follow-up text message after refusing to pay the worker. "You want to come to my job & create a issue, I will handcuff you take you into custody & wait

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